

## **Istook Supports Tax Relief for Oklahoma Families**

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) stood with the majority of the House of Representatives on Thursday demanding tax relief for Oklahoma families, and working to end the "marriage penalty" in the federal income tax code. The Marriage Penalty and Family Tax Relief Act of 2001 would benefit 451,234 children and 309,009 married couples in Oklahoma.

Istook's work on marriage tax relief actually began years ago, during his first term, when he wrote a bill similar to what the House approved today.

**"It's simply a matter of fairness," said Istook. "People shouldn't pay higher taxes just because they are married. Families are the backbone of our society. At the very least, we should treat them equally with singles, and certainly not penalize them."**

The measure doubles the \$500 child tax credit to \$1,000 and increases the standard deduction for married couples to twice that of singles. Currently, the standard deduction is \$4,550 for singles and \$7,660 for couples. Under the bill, in 2001, the standard deduction for couples would be \$9,100. The child tax credit would be phased in over 6 years, with parents receiving \$600 per child in 2001.

The bill also increases the Earned Income Tax Credit, allows couples to apply the child tax credit to their Alternative Minimum Tax liability, and expands the 15% income bracket for couples to twice that of singles beginning in 2004 and being phased in over 6 years.

**"This means an average savings of over \$500 for a family of four next year and more to follow," said Istook. "This is real and immediate tax relief for those who need it most, middle-income working families."**

A similar marriage tax relief measure passed the House last year by a vote of 268 to 158, supported by 51 Democrats, but was vetoed by Clinton. President Bush has identified marriage tax relief as a major priority, so the measure's prospects of becoming law are much more hopeful this year.

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and use the marriage tax relief calculator to find the cost of the marriage penalty to you.**